

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia
SUBJECT Slovak Dissatisfaction with the Communist Regime

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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1. Dissatisfaction with the present regime in Slovakia is increasing among the working classes, the peasants, the clerics, and the small businessmen.
2. The workers realize that the extravagant promises made by the Communist Party are not being kept: wages are being reduced and working hours are being increased. Strikes or arbitration are entirely out of the question. Compulsory "ideological indoctrination" sessions take up the workers' free time in the evenings and "voluntary" work brigades their Sundays. At the gas works of the Bratislava Dynamite-Nobel plant, for example, wages were reduced from 17 to 11 crowns per hour, reducing the take-home pay to a bare 1,800 to 2,000 crowns per month after the deduction of union dues, insurance premiums, etc. When a delegation of three workers protested the reduction, they were immediately dispatched to a labor camp.
3. The mildest expression of dissatisfaction with the regime or with living conditions in Slovakia is sufficient grounds for arrest and detention in a labor camp. A three-man board attached to the Cadre Commission of the Slovak Communist Party has the function of deciding who is to be sentenced to serve in a labor camp. There is no possibility of appealing against the decisions of this board. The members of this board are:

Lietavec (fnu)
Dr. Michal Gero
Dr. Zitnan (fnu)

The above-mentioned board is, however, to be supplanted by separate commissions which will be set up in each "kraj", the new administrative unit which will soon be introduced by the Communist regime. The head of the commission for the Bratislava Kraj will be one Bartaky.

4. Slovak forced labor camps are functioning at Novsky, Ustie na Oravu, and Ilava (attached to the state prison there). There is another unidentified camp in eastern Slovakia. It was at one time reported that a fifth camp had been set up at Petržalka, near Bratislava, but this is not now believed to be the case. The camp at Novsky contains some 5,000 inmates, but it is reported that a number of prisoners from this camp have been shipped on, possibly to the Soviet Union.

CLASSIFICATION

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5. Most Slovak peasants live in fear that their small holdings may someday be absorbed into collective farms. The first kolkhoz in Slovakia has already been established at Bela, near Parkan. Its manager is a certain Paul Schulz, a bankrupt landowner from Orviste. He is not believed to be a convinced Communist.
6. The more prosperous peasants, farmers of the "kulak" class, are being subjected to confiscatory taxation, and their production quotas are set at levels deliberately calculated to ruin them.
7. Bureaucrats and factory managers who have gone out of their way to collaborate with the Communist regime are also beginning to feel the lash. They have worked diligently to retain their well-paid posts in the nationalized enterprises, receiving from 20,000 to 30,000 crowns per month "on account, pending the permanent fixing of the rates of pay". Now, after almost a year, they have learned that their wages have been retroactively fixed at about half the rate they had been led to expect to receive. They must, furthermore, eventually pay back to the state the difference between what they had received "on account" and what the new retroactive scale entitles them regularly to receive. Still another blow has been dealt the collaborationist managers in the following manner: when their concerns were nationalized, trusted Communists were appointed to act as their deputies. Now, having learned every trick of the trade, these so-called deputies are taking over the control of the various enterprises, and their former chiefs are being relegated to minor positions.
8. The system of central management for each branch of industry, which was introduced some time ago, is now being revised, and the individual plant is becoming once more the basic industrial unit.
9. A vigorous campaign is currently being conducted to combat the influence and reduce the strength of the churches in Slovakia. Minister Cepicka recently demanded in the Central Action Committee that all church property be nationalized and that all priests and pastors be paid as civil servants. This proposal will no doubt eventually be carried out. At a recent meeting of Protestant church councils in Slovakia it was decided that if the state should assume the function of paying the ministers, and in this way control the placement and transfer of the ministers, then the churches would renounce the financial support of the state and rely entirely upon the support of their congregations.
10. All reports emanating from Slovakia at the present time indicate the presence of a strong undercurrent of anti-Czech feeling among the population. The citizens feel that Slovakia was the most openly anti-Communist territory within the Soviet orbit, and that the short-sightedness and docility of the Czech politicians in Prague made the Communist coup possible. The people particularly resent the fact that the Communist regime in Prague has ignored all Slovak strivings toward autonomy and has pursued a policy of rigid centralism.
11. The anti-Czech sentiments described above are nowhere, however, translated into a desire for the reestablishment of the Slovak puppet government of 1939-1945. The Slovak fascist leaders who succeeded in escaping to the Vatican, to Argentina, or to Spain before the Allied advance in 1945 are thoroughly discredited and have only a negligible following in Slovakia. The people of Slovakia realize the necessity of remaining a part of the Czechoslovak Republic and would not, upon the elimination of the Communist regime, press for independent status.

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